

### **WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A biocompatible fastener, said biocompatible fastener having a first portion and a second portion, said first portion being made out of a first bioabsorbable material, said first bioabsorbable material having a first degradation rate, said second portion being made out of a material selected from the group consisting of a non-bioabsorbable material and a second bioabsorbable material, said second bioabsorbable material having a second degradation rate, said second degradation rate being slower than said first degradation rate.

2. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 1 wherein said second portion is made out of a non-bioabsorbable material.

3. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 1 wherein said first portion is coated over a portion of said second portion.

4. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 1 wherein said first portion is positioned within said biocompatible fastener so that degradation of said first portion results in fragmentation of the biocompatible fastener.

5. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 1 wherein said biocompatible fastener comprises a male member and a female member, said male member comprising a post having a head disposed at a first end thereof, said female member defining a bore adapted to receive said head and having a flange extending into said bore, said head being engageable with said flange once said head has been inserted therepast so as to inhibit withdrawal of said head.

6. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 5 wherein said head comprises an outer coating and an inner core, wherein said first portion is said outer coating and said second portion

comprises said inner core, and wherein degradation of said outer coating facilitates withdrawal of said head past said flange.

7. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 5 wherein said flange comprises an outer coating and an inner core, wherein said first portion is said outer coating and said second portion comprises said inner core, and wherein degradation of said outer coating facilitates withdrawal of said head past said flange.

8. A biocompatible fastener comprising a first member and a second member, said first member being engageable with said second member, said first member comprising a first bioabsorbable material having a first degradation rate, said second member comprising a material selected from the group consisting of a non-bioabsorbable material and a second bioabsorbable material having a second degradation rate, said second degradation rate being slower than said first degradation rate, and wherein, after engagement of said first member with said second member, degradation of said first member permits disengagement of said first member and said second member.

9. A biocompatible fastener comprising:

- (a) a sleeve, said sleeve defining a bore;
- (b) a flange formed on said sleeve and extending into said bore;
- (c) a male member, said male member comprising a post and a head disposed at a first end of said post, said head being insertable into said bore and past said flange, said head being engageable with said flange once inserted therepast so as to inhibit withdrawal of said head from said bore;

(d) wherein at least one of said flange and said head comprises an outer coating material and an inner core material, said outer coating material being a first bioabsorbable material having a first degradation rate, said inner core material being a material selected from the group consisting of a non-bioabsorbable material and a second bioabsorbable material, said second bioabsorbable material having a second degradation rate, said second degradation rate being slower than said first degradation rate; and

(e) wherein degradation of said outer coating material facilitates withdrawal of said head past said flange.

10. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 9 further comprising a first base and a second base, said sleeve being mounted on said first base, said male member being mounted on said second base.

11. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 10 wherein said sleeve is provided with a longitudinal slot.

12. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 10 wherein said sleeve is provided with a pair of longitudinal slots.

13. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 10 wherein said sleeve terminates at one end in a sharp tip.

14. A biocompatible fastener comprising:

(a) a male portion, said male portion comprising

(i) a first base member, said first base member having a bottom surface, and

(ii) a first male member mounted on said bottom surface of said first base member, said first male member comprising a post extending downwardly from said bottom surface, said post having a bottom end, and a head disposed at said bottom end of said post; and

(b) a female portion, said female portion comprising

(i) a second base member, said second base member having a top surface, and

(ii) a first sleeve mounted on said top surface of said second base member and extending upwardly therefrom, said first sleeve defining a bore adapted to receive said head and having a flange formed thereon, said flange extending into said bore, said flange being engageable with said head once said head has been inserted therepast so as to inhibit withdrawal of said head from said bore;

(c) wherein at least one of said flange and said head is at least partially made of a first bioabsorbable material having a first degradation rate and wherein at least one of said first base member and said second base member comprises a material selected from the group consisting of a non-bioabsorbable material and a second bioabsorbable material, said second bioabsorbable material having a second degradation rate, said second degradation rate being slower than said first degradation rate; and

(d) wherein degradation of said first bioabsorbable material facilitates withdrawal of said head past said flange.

15. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 14 wherein said head is generally conical in shape and terminates in a relatively sharp tip.

16. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 14 wherein said first base member is generally flat and oval.

17. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 14 wherein said second base member is generally flat and oval.

18. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 14 wherein said first sleeve is provided with at least one longitudinal slot.

19. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 14 wherein said first sleeve is provided with a pair of longitudinal slots.

20. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 14 wherein said first sleeve has a top end and wherein said top end is shaped to terminate in a relatively sharp tip.

21. The biocompatible fastener as claimed in claim 14 wherein said male portion further comprises a second male member mounted on said first base member and extending downwardly therefrom, said second male member being identical to said first male member, and wherein said female portion further comprises a second sleeve mounted on said second base member and extending upwardly therefrom, said second sleeve being aligned with said second male member and being a mirror image of said first sleeve.